

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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PRACTICAL VALUES OF HELL

BY REV. R. F. HALLFORD

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Port St. Joe, Florida

"But rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Matt. 10:28).

Strange subject, isn't it!

Some do not even believe there is a Hell; others laugh at it; still others shudder at the thought; most people dislike either thinking or talking about it; but here we are talking about its *practical values*! Most of us are probably far too prone to think of Hell as one of those tragic realities which we wish did not exist. The idea that Hell has any value may be a new thought to some. However, Hell does have values, and they are practical.

We are not going to waste time and effort in a lengthy argument to prove the fact of Hell. The Bible is too clear in its teachings on this for any intelligent person to be ignorant enough to question that fact. The truth is that the person who denies the fact of Hell notwithstanding passages which unmistakably set forth the fact of Hell and the eternal punishment of sinners therein: "The rich man also died, and was buried; And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:22,23). Here Jesus shows us that the moment an unsaved person leaves the body he goes into a place called Hell, where he is in torments. Note the statements of Rev. 20:14,15 to this effect: "And death and Hell (Hades) were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire." That the punishment of the wicked is eternal in its duration is taught very clearly by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Far back in the Old Testament we find this solemn truth of the destiny

of the lost set forth: "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17).

So much for this part. Now let us consider some of the practical values of Hell:

I. It Establishes the Character And Throne of God.

There is much teaching today about the character of God which has a tendency to present Him as a Being of a lop-sided or unbalanced character. If we allow our thinking to be molded by some teachers, including popular preachers, we will soon come to the conclusion that God is nothing more than a "sissy." There are far too many who would have us believe that God is only a God of love, mercy, tenderness, and grace. God is all this, but He is more. This is only one side of His character. We should remember that He is a God of perfectly balanced character and attributes. If He were the kind of Being Who never becomes angry, never administers punishment, and allows sinners to go unmolested on their way, then He would soon show to us that He positively condoned evil and cared nothing about restraining it. His moral government would be overthrown and He would be dethroned!

Yes, God is a God of love, but He is also a God of holiness, and as such He hates and must punish sin. If He did not hate the bad, He could not love the good. Habakkuk 1:13 tells us that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Of course, the idea is that He cannot behold evil with favor. His holy

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Jesus May Come Today!

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

"Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" — Matt. 24:42.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" — Matt. 24:44.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" — Matt. 25:13.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" — Mark 13:33.

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" — Mark 13:35-37.

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." — Luke 12:40.

"Behold, the judge standeth before the door" — James 5:9.

"Behold, I come quickly" — Rev. 22:7.

"The time is at hand" — Rev. 22:10.

"And, behold, I come quickly" — Rev. 22:12.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." — Rev. 22:20.

Yes, Jesus may come today! The coming of Christ to the earth is imminent: it may occur any moment, day or night!

There is not a single event prophesied in the Bible which must come to pass before the Saviour returns. As far as we can know, no event, either political, economic or spiritual, need occur before Jesus comes. Not another war need be declared, not another gospel sermon preached, not another soul be saved as far as can be told from the Scriptures, before the Saviour comes to catch up His saints into the air for the marriage supper in Heaven.

And I do not mean only that the signs of the Saviour's coming show that it is likely to be soon. I believe there are many, many signs which multiply daily, showing that Jesus should be expected to come soon to raise the Christian dead and change the Christian living and call us all up to meet Him in the air for a honeymoon in Heaven. I believe the wars and rumors of wars, the great falling away, the false religions, the worldliness and form and powerlessness among Christians, the rising of dictatorships, the increasing curse on nature with floods, droughts, pestilences, earthquakes and tornados, all are Scriptural signs that the

to watch and pray since they knew not the day nor the hour when the Son of man should return. At Pentecost the promised pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles took place and they began their witness for Christ. Since that day there has never been a moment but what Christians ought to have expected Jesus to return as He most certainly might have done.

The Scriptural signs given show that when they are fulfilled, the coming of the Lord draws nigh. But all these Scriptures quoted above show that the coming of the Lord might have been at any time from Pentecost on till now. For that reason all the signs of the second coming are left indefinite in degree. Wars grow worse and worse but the Scripture never says just how much war must occur before the Saviour comes. Worldliness and unbelief in the churches grow worse and worse, an accelerating and increasingly weighty evidence that the Saviour's return is "even at the door." But some of this worldliness has been in the churches from the beginning and how far wrong the church will go before the Saviour's return is not revealed in the Bible. There is not one single sign for which Christians have needed to wait before they should expect the return of the Saviour. And not one single event has occurred or will occur, definitely enough that any person can know the day nor hour of His return.

Christ's Imminent Return Clearly Stated By Christ Himself.

The Bible is full of teaching about the second coming of Christ and related events. Those of us (Continued on page two)

VICTORY!

A MESSAGE TO OUR ARMED FORCES

By Rev. William J. Fox
Pastor, Galilee Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois

We are now in the "V for Victory Campaign" with Great Britain because we all realize that what is needed more than anything else for our beloved country is victory for our Allies against Germany, Japan, and Italy. But the greatest Victory of the hour is not a military Victory over our enemies but a spiritual Victory over sin. The most important "V for Victory Campaign" is the spiritual one, for the Word of God says, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt 16:26).

The Secret of Victory!

The great secret of spiritual Victory is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ for only the real Christian can experience and say, "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the VICTORY through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:57).

Jesus Christ makes it very plain that He alone is the door to salvation for He says, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9)! When He says, "I am the door," He excludes everything and everybody else. Hence the Church—although a divine institution—is not the Door. The preacher—although able to point his hearers to the Door—is not the Door. The ordinances of the church—although given by the

Lord—are not the Door. Good works—although enjoined upon believers—are not the Door. The Lord Jesus Himself is the Door! He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It is written, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must

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By Lola Bradshaw, Office Manager
Sword of the Lord Publishers

We have just had two very comforting and encouraging letters about Editor John R. Rice's little 24-page booklet, *What Must I Do to Be Saved*, which we are trying to spread as widely as possible to those who will read it, in order to win souls. We quote from the letters here that you may be blessed by them too.

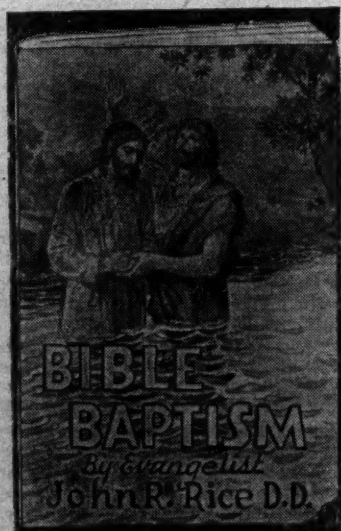
Mr. C. V. L. of Wichita, Kansas, signed the decision slip on *What Must I Do to Be Saved* which reads: "Realizing that I am a sinner, and believing that Christ died for my sins, I here and now trust Him to be my personal Saviour, depending on Him to forgive all my sins, change

my heart, and give me everlasting life as He promised to do. I am glad to confess Him as my Saviour and gladly mail this to let you know." In a letter accompanying this signed decision slip, Mr. L. wrote:

"My whole family are going to be baptized this coming Sunday, and I am thanking Jesus Christ for showing me the light. Am enclosing \$1.00; use it anyway you see fit."

The letter was signed by three other members of the family. The next day a letter came from a widow at Westmont, Illinois. She said:

"Dear Evangelist Rice: My husband (Continued on page two)



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REV. WILLIAM J. FOX

JESUS MAY COME TODAY!

(Continued from page one)

who take the Bible literally and believe it all and are therefore premillennialists, expecting the literal, bodily, physical return of Christ and His reign upon earth as foretold in the Scriptures, have much to preach. We have the great themes of the resurrection; the rapture or meeting Christ in the air; the judgment seat of Christ; the great tribulation; the Man of Sin, or Antichrist; the glorious return of Christ with saints and angels; the battle of Armageddon; the restoration of the Jews to Palestine; the judgment of the living nations; the millennial reign of Christ on David's throne, etc. All these matters ought to be preached for they are clearly taught in the Bible. But very strangely we often neglect the greatest theme in connection with the Saviour's coming; and that is that His coming is imminent, and that every Christian is commanded to watch! watch! watch! for no man knows the day or hour when He shall come.

Whatever Jesus taught about His second coming the point of His message was always this, that His coming is to be sudden, unexpected and surprising so that every Christian should be ready for His coming at any moment.

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, after thirty-five verses concerned with the second coming, then Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

From verses 36 to 51, the last sixteen verses of the same chapter, Jesus earnestly urges the unexpectedness and imminence of His coming. In verse 42 He says, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," and in verse 44 He says, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

The angels do not know when Jesus will return, Jesus Himself, while in the flesh, did not know when He would return as He Himself said in Mark 13:32.

Then in Mark 13:33 He said, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

And in Mark 13:37 He repeats again His warning, saying, "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

In Matthew 25:13 Jesus closes the parable of the ten virgins, saying, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

In Luke 12:40, after warning Christians that they should be "like unto men that wait for their Lord," "And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants," (Luke 12:38) and next reminding them how a man should be constantly watching lest the thief should break in and steal (verse 39), then Jesus said, "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Only one honest meaning is possible in these scriptures, Jesus may come today!

If the Bible is a trustworthy book then Jesus might have returned even in the lifetime of these New Testament Christians. He might have returned any time during the centuries since then or He may return now at any moment. If the Father Himself has set the time, then He has not revealed it even to the angels and certainly not to any man. He may come today. There is no other possible meaning to these Scriptures.

He has put no promised event

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before the Saviour's coming. There are no Scriptures yet to be fulfilled before Jesus comes and we are commanded plainly, repeatedly, insistently to watch for His coming.

If you do not believe that the coming of Christ is imminent then you make Christ Himself a deceiver. It would have been cruel and insincere for Jesus to have all the apostles and New Testament Christians earnestly watching for His return if it was already a settled fact that He could not return for thousands of years. No, the words of Jesus were true words and they are as good today for us as they were the day they were uttered to the apostles. Jesus may come this very day, yea, this very hour. We may hear the sound of the trumpet and may feel ourselves suddenly changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air where we will be gathered with the saints of all ages and carried to the Father's house of many mansions while the unsaved are left on a wicked world, turned over to sin and to the man of sin until we shall return with Christ to reign. Today I may see Jesus! Today I may see my mother, my father, my baby brothers! Today I may enter into the reward of my labors. Today I may lay down my burdens, lay down my sorrows, lay down my weaknesses, lay down my disappointments, lay down my frail, sinful body! Today I may be clothed upon with a glorious body like that of our Saviour! Oh! Today I may see Jesus and report and bring in my sheaves rejoicing, and kiss His dear feet! May God grant that I will not be ashamed before Him at His coming but that I may be watching with my lamp trimmed and burning when I hear the great shout, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" Jesus may come this very day! Hallelujah!

II His Imminent Second Coming Illustrated By Jesus

How precious this doctrine is to the Saviour and how important to His disciples, we can see by the way He repeated it and illustrated it. Notice the illustrations the Saviour gave.

1. The second coming will be like the flood in the days of Noah. Jesus said,

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." —Matt. 24:37-39.

The fact of the coming flood had been clearly foretold. For one hundred years Noah had been building an ark and preparing for the flood. You may be sure that everybody in the inhabited portion of the earth knew of God's warning. You could no more keep the ark a secret than if in the Panhandle of Texas or in the mountains of Arkansas men should work for a hundred years building a ship like the Titanic or Queen Mary! Noah's preaching "got over." Yet the people did not know when the flood would come. They did not believe it. Noah himself did not know when. The Lord gave no definite date. Noah went into the ark when he was commanded and God shut the door. Even then the flood did not come for seven days. There was no preceding signs by which they could be sure of the exact date of the threatened deluge, even if they had believed it was coming, so the men of that age "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark," and that is the way it will be, the Saviour says, when He comes. People will be as unprepared and His coming will be as sudden and unexpected.

2. The Saviour's coming is likened to the coming of the bridegroom whose bridemaids have been waiting until far into the night (Matt. 25:1-13). Some of the bridemaids had no oil and expected their dry wicks to burn until he came but their lamps went out. All of them, the wise and the foolish, those with the oil of salvation and those with only the lamps of profession, "slumbered and

slept." And then at midnight His coming was so sudden and unexpected that those who had no oil did not have time to secure it but were left without and missed the wedding.

And so that there could be no doubt of His meaning, the closing verse of the parable says, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." The point of the parable of the ten virgins is this, that the coming of Jesus is imminent. He may come today, so therefore be ready.

The virgins knew the bridegroom was coming, but just when they did not know. He might have returned at once. They ought to have been ready at any moment.

It is strange that people would so pervert the Scriptures as to miss the very heart of the Saviour's teaching here. Yet a few years ago the story of the ten virgins was given in the International Sunday School Lessons but only the first twelve verses were printed. The thirteenth verse where Jesus gives the conclusion and lesson of the parable was omitted entirely and in the Sunday School quarterlies that I saw the Saviour's second coming was not even mentioned! The parable of the ten virgins is not simply a lesson on preparedness. It is a lesson on preparedness, not for usefulness, not even for death primarily, but preparedness for the second coming of Christ. The lesson is that Jesus may come at any moment, so watch and be ready!

3. The second coming is as imminent as a master returning to his home after a long journey. Jesus used this illustration more than once. In Matthew 24:45-47 Jesus says,

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

The return of such a master is imminent. That is, he ought to be expected at any moment and it is a faithful and wise servant who earnestly does his duty day by day, looking forward to his master's return.

But there are those who say that "my Lord delayeth His coming," and that we ought not to expect Him momentarily now. For such the Saviour continued the same parable in verses 48-51 as follows:

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is a picture, perhaps, of an unsaved one. But unsaved are as much accountable to Jesus as the saved. All a sinner has to get from God and he must give an account to the Lord Jesus Christ whether he loves Him or not. This world belongs to Jesus Christ and one day He is going to claim it. Meantime, all who read this had better be ready for Jesus to come for they shall certainly have to give an account for their stewardship even if they have not been converted.

And what a sad teaching this is! Don't you see that one who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming" is not right in his heart? He is not anxious for Jesus to come, perhaps is not willing for Jesus to come, and therefore does not watch. This Scripture indicates that it is always unbelief and sin that keeps one from eagerly watching for Jesus to come.

Jesus taught the same matter in Mark 13:34-37 and verse 35 says, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning." Surely the coming of Jesus may be today, may be any moment.

The imminence of the Saviour's coming He illustrated by the unexpected thief.

In Matthew 24:43, 44, Jesus said, "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would

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not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

In Luke 12:39, 40, Jesus said, "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

The coming of a thief to break in and steal is a matter that people ought always to be forewarned and forearmed about. There is no set time for the thief to come. He may come at any moment. Therefore every householder ought to be prepared and constantly watching. Just so the coming of the Saviour may be at any moment and the only way for us to be safe from embarrassment and shame when He comes is to be watching and ready. The saved who slumber and have their lamps smoky will be embarrassed; the lost who have no oil of salvation will not only be ashamed but will be left behind and will miss the wedding.

III. Sinner, Take Warning!

Let the unsaved readers observe the note of solemn warning in all these passages where Jesus spoke of His coming. Every time He mentions that we should watch because He might return any hour of any day, there is a thrill of joy for the Christian; and yet there is a solemn and fearful thought for the unsaved.

"As it was in the days of Noe, so shall the coming of the Son of man be," Jesus said, and remember that all the world, except eight souls perished in that terrible flood because of their wickedness of which they did not repent!

And when Jesus spoke of the return of a master to call his servants to account after a long absence. He warned of the fearful punishment that would befall the unfaithful servant who began to eat and drink with the drunken and to beat the other servants, etc. The coming of Christ for His saints will be a sad day for every unsaved soul.

His coming is likened unto a thief in the night and like the householder who is not ready has his home broken up and his goods stolen, so every sinner who has not trusted Christ will find himself bereft of the most precious things in this world — His loved ones who are Christians. Many a man will have mother, father, wife, babies or dear friends taken away in an instant, and he be left to face a world gone mad in sin, with every single Christian removed at one stroke!

Some few will be saved during the great tribulation, but even then they cannot miss the tribulation. Some of the virgins who had no oil in their lamps may go back and get oil, but when they come to knock at the door where the wedding is, they will find the door is shut and they are left outside. Some will be saved, I say, during the great tribulation, but at what terrible cost! With churches closed, preachers gone, loved ones gone, they will be left as poor, crying babes in a wilderness of sin without a single man of God to teach them, without an older Christian to comfort them or give them strength.

And saddest of all is this fact; when Christ comes and takes away all His saints, then most of the good influences will be taken out of this world and most of those who reject Christ will then plunge headlong into such sin as they never before dreamed of. The Antichrist will be so deceptive and his power so terrible that few will oppose him. None can buy or sell without taking his mark and those who take his mark will never be saved. Many of those who are saved will endure the fiercest persecution, hunted like wild beasts and put to death for the cause of Christ. Those who are unsaved when Jesus comes for His saints, will be left behind and most of them then will never, never, never turn to Christ for salvation.

You who read these lines, then, make sure that you are saved now for Jesus may come today. It is terribly dangerous for any unsaved sinner to live one day without Christ. It will be a thousand-fold

band recently went to be with the Lord, and it was through your booklet and the prayers of saints that he accepted Christ as Saviour. Please accept this money as a means of getting your *What Must I Do to Be Saved* out. Trusting the Lord for everything. In glory we shall know the why of everything."

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If you could use a few or many, giving them out only to those who agree to read them, and wherever possible accompanying the gift with some earnest conversation, we should be glad to send as many as you need, trusting the Lord to supply our need.

Write to
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Wheaton, Illinois

more dangerous to go into the great tribulation without Jesus when all the saints have been taken out at the coming of the Saviour.

IV. Objections Answered

Here I can imagine that some reader says, "I know that the words of Jesus seem to teach that He may return at any time. But certain other Scriptures appear to contradict that." Some good Christian people do not understand certain passages of Scripture relating to the second coming, and so stumble at this blessed teaching that the Saviour may return at any moment. Therefore they do not constantly watch as He commanded. They miss the joy of "the blessed hope."

However, since the Bible never contradicts itself, it will not be difficult to reconcile these Scriptures, and that I will try to do and show that there is no prophesied event to come before the return of Christ.

(1). It is sometimes said that the gospel must first be preached to all the world before Jesus comes; that He cannot return for His saints until the evangelization of the world is completed.

The Scripture quoted for this is Matthew 24:14:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The mistake here is in supposing that "the end" is the coming of Christ to take away His saints. Rather, "the end" is the end of the tribulation time. In the same passage, verse eight tells about "the beginning of sorrows," which I believe is the time just after the rapture of the saints. Verse twenty

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PRACTICAL VALUES OF HELL

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nature forbids a complacent attitude as He beholds sin.

Certainly God is a God of love, grace, mercy, kindness, and gentleness, but He is also a God of justice, holiness, light, righteousness and wrath. We need to realize that God's wrath reaches just as far on the one hand as does His love on the other. In fact, I am convinced that God's wrath is just the negative side of His love; it is His love burning against sin.

Oh yes, we have heard so much of "God is love," that we have almost lost sight of the fact of His wrath or of His governmental right to punish those who reject His love and mercy. But the Bible also says that "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7:11). If you are inclined to think that God is incapable of anger, note these words in Nahum 1:2, "He reserveth wrath for His enemies." We love to read and quote the first part of John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" but please remember that there is some more in the verse: "and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Also, we had better accept the truth of II Thessalonians 1:7, 8: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The fact of Hell and the punishment of sinners therein establishes the character and throne of God, hence it is of practical value!

II. It Measures the Enormity Of Sin.

It is not very popular now to talk about the enormity of sin. In fact, there is a growing tendency to minimize sin, hence the consequent disbelief in Hell. When people believe that sin is sin then they believe in the reality of Hell in which such a rebellion against God is punished. However sin is called other things now. More and more it is referred to as a mere mistake, a necessary stage in man's progressive development, a slight departure from the exact course, missing the mark, a falling short of the desired goal, and other apologetic nothings. The awful hellishness, blackness, and heinousness of sin is lost sight of! Sin is treated like a cream puff instead of like a rattlesnake. People have decided that sin is not so bad after all, and that Hell is too severe a punishment for it, therefore they have rejected the idea of Hell and its punishment. Well did the prophet speak out against such persons and their teachings: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20).

God uses only one descriptive word for sin: "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). God says that sin is "exceeding sinful." There is nothing worse than sin, therefore God could not compare it with anything else. He just had to use a word which expressed a greater degree of the same thing when He spoke of sin.

How bad is sin? Frankly, I do not know. It is the ugliest word in human language, the most tragic fact of human existence, the blackest, most awful blot upon the human soul. It wrecks bodies, darkens minds, and damns souls. It is that awful thing which looks God in the face and defies Him. It is the rebellious thing which once invaded Heaven, got into the heart of an angel, and through him tried to dethrone God. It is all this and infinitely more. So far as I know, Hell is the only adequate measure of the enormity of sin. We are given some idea of its badness in Revelation 14:10, 11, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." Look at those words again, will you? If Hell is that terrible, sin must be awfully bad!

III. Hell Vindicates the Cross

Some would question the necessity and justice of Calvary. There are those who, reading the agonies of Christ on the Cross, shrink from it all asking, "Wasn't there some other way for man to be saved and brought into the right relationship with God? Wasn't it cruel and unnecessary for Christ to go to Calvary and suffer in that manner? If we could have been delivered from sin and made children of God without Christ suffering on Calvary as He did, then surely it was unfair and cruel for God to allow Him to go there. But, was there any other way?

There are those who teach that we could have been saved apart from Christ's sufferings on the Cross. Let us look at the inspired comment on their position: "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily life should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). Look at this, you who say that we could have been saved by living up to the law of Moses! We could not be saved through our efforts to attain to a righteousness through keeping a law. Romans 10:3, 4 very clearly tells us, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." We had broken God's law. The penalty for the broken law was death. Either we had to die for our transgression, or a guiltless substitute had to die in our stead. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

It was either Calvary or Hell! If Christ had not gone to Calvary, we would have gone to Hell! Our sins had to be punishment either in the body of Christ our Substitute at Calvary or in our whole being for eternity in Hell. Christ went to Hell on the Cross in our stead. By this we mean that, on the Cross, Christ suffered everything that lost souls in Hell must suffer for eternity. He experienced separation from God in that dark moment when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). This is the meaning of Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." That is why John 3:16 says what it does say, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is a choice between the two: No giving of His Son to die on the Cross and our eternal perishing — or Christ's death for us and everlasting life as the result. Therefore if it meant Calvary for Christ or Hell for us, then the Cross with all His sufferings on it is vindicated.

IV. It Evokes Praise to God From The Saved.

It is wonderful to be saved from sin's bondage. It is glorious for the shackles of sin to be broken, setting sin's captive free. It is a cause for exultant praise to God when the cords of sin are loosed, making of a sinner a free child of God. It is something for which we should praise God eternally that He reached down and picked us up from the mire of sin and made us His own dear children. For all this we join with the Psalmist in saying: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Psa. 40:2, 3).

But an additional cause for praise to God is that He not only saved us from sin; He also saved us from the results of sin. In fact, He saved us from the miseries of Hell! When we think about what Hell is, what torment it contains for those who go there, and that He freely delivered us from it all and put us forever beyond its reach, our hearts overflow and our voices are raised in praise to Him Who is our Deliverer. The question is raised in Isa. 33:14, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Is that what we are delivered from? Yes, blessed be his Name forever, He delivered us from a place of eternal, conscious torment—even

a lake of fire and brimstone, where we would have suffered the unbearable pangs of unspeakable misery for an endless eternity! How we should and do praise our wonderful Saviour for such a wonderful and complete deliverance! V. It Presents An Irresistible Urge To Soul-Winning.

There are many bases upon which we can appeal to saved people to win the lost to Christ. Any one of them should be sufficient. There is the appeal of the dying Saviour from His Cross of sacrifice, saying, "Go tell the lost peoples of the world that I have died and they can live through believing on me." Then there is the appeal of the heart-broken parent who says "Oh, won't you pray for and witness to my poor, wandering boy or that frivolous daughter of mine?" Still again there is the appeal which is presented by hunger in your own heart as a child of God for others to know the sweetness and blessedness of salvation. All these are worthy motives and should have our attention and best effort.

I have read somewhere that an avowed infidel had as his guest a former schoolmate of his who had become a minister. After a few days' visit in the home of this infidel, they were discussing one day matters of a spiritual nature. The infidel said something like this to the minister: "You say you believe that people like me, who do not believe in your Christ, are lost and bound for Hell, don't you? Well, I am convinced that you do not believe it at all. Here you have been visiting in my home for the past few days, living under the same roof with me, coming into contact with me every day, and yet you who claim to believe that I am bound for a Hell of eternal, conscious torment have not said the first word to me about my danger, neither have you put forth one effort to lead me to faith in your Saviour. Why, man, if I believed what you claim to believe, I would get down on my knees and crawl to everyone of my neighbors, if I need be, and plead with them to accept Christ! No, you Christians do not believe what you say about Hell and the lost condition and doom of unbelievers. If you did, you would do something about it!"

Who among us will dare to deny what this infidel said? We have to hang our heads in shame and admit that it is too true. Lost people all around us, rushing the downward road to Hell, can truthfully say, "No man cared for my soul" (Psa. 142:4). If we believe they are going to Hell, let's get busy and do something toward heading them off!

One of the greatest, if not the greatest plea I have ever heard for saved people to warn the lost not to go to Hell is that which came from a man in Hell, "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27, 28). Here is a man in Hell, suffering its torments, pleading for someone to go back and warn his brothers not to come there. Oh, hear him, my friend: you may not listen to the feeble words that I speak, but surely you will listen to a man in Hell, telling you to testify to others, lest they also come there. If a man in Hell pleads for others who are on their way there to be warned, in order that they may not go there, surely we ought to take his plea seriously.

When we do lead a soul to Christ, we can have the joy of knowing that we have rescued that soul from Hell. We are earnestly exhorted in Jude 23, "And others save with fear, pulling (lit. 'snatching') them out of the fire." How wonderful to know that we have been used of the Lord in "plucking some as brands from the burning!"

Fellow-Christian, believe me when I tell you that these precious souls are going to Hell! I tell you this on the authority of God's Word. Has it occurred to you that some of your children, or perhaps your parents, possibly other members of your family, your next-door-neighbors, someone across the street, or someone around the corner from you may be going to Hell just as rapidly as life can take them? Yes, they may be good, moral, clean, cultured, refined, and even religious, but did you know that if they have not definitely received Christ by faith they are go-

ing to Hell? "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

VI. It Constitutes a Basis For a Mighty Appeal to the Unsaved.

My unsaved reader, your destiny is Hell. If the brittle thread of your life were snapped tonight, you would drop off into the same place to which the impenitent rich man went as described in Luke 16:24-26, "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." And that is not all. Following the judgment of the unsaved at the Great White Throne, you will be cast into the Lake of Fire to spend eternity in its unspeakable torment. Hear what God says: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

No human tongue or pen could possibly tell how bad Hell is, and yet you must learn it from experience if you go on in rejection of Christ. We do know this much: it is a place of eternal separation from God; a place of the blackness of darkness forever; a place where such a word as love has never been heard; a place where mercy droops her wings and dies; a place where a drop of water to cool your parching tongue is denied; a place where your only companions will be the worst of this earth; a place in which the only music will be the shrieks and groans and hollow moans of other damned souls; a place where the clanking chain of your spiritual bondage can be heard rattling forever; a place from which escape is impossible once you get into it. Oh, may God grant that you may never see it! But some of you are determined to go there and spend eternity in it in spite of all that God offers you and in the face of our warnings and entreaties.

Oh, you unbelieving, Christ-rejecting sinners, "How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" (Matt. 23:33). When you turn a deaf ear to our pleas, reject the only One Who can save you from Hell, refuse to believe on Him Who can save you from its miseries, continue neglecting the all-important matter of salvation, keep waiting for a more convenient season to be saved, how do you expect to escape? Is there someone reading these lines who will make this question your own: "How can I escape the damnation of Hell?" Do you really wish to know? Well, listen while I tell you God's way of escape:

There are only two steps. They are simple and easy. They are "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). It is *repent or perish!* Jesus says to you, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). It is *turn or burn!* The Psalmist warns you, "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready" (Psa. 7:12). Do you have a changed attitude toward sin, realizing that you are guilty and deserving of Hell, hating sin and desiring to be saved from it? That is repentance.

There remains the other step: *Believe—receive the Lord Jesus Christ.* "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "As many as received Him, to them gave He right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). Do you now depend on Jesus to save you from your sins, leaning your whole weight on Him, resting your case entirely on Him? That is "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ." If so, you are saved—and there is no Hell for the believer in Jesus Christ!

Dear reader, these are facts. If you, after knowing these facts, go on without Christ and finally into Hell, you are doing the most fool-

VICTORY!

(Continued from page one)

be saved" (Acts 4:12). Christ warned us by saying, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Multitudes of people who expect to go to heaven will instead be lost. Thousands of "good" people, "moral" people, even church members and workers will find themselves lost when they expected to be saved. This is the plain and explicit truth that Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is teaching in the words just quoted above.

The Plain Way of Victory!

Every real Christian knows and can say, "THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH" (I John 5:4). For the Word of God says, "For ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). But you may say, "What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ?" There are many common words which we clearly understand in the ordinary relations of life, but when we lift them into the religious sphere they puzzle us. Such a word is faith. What we need to see is that the faith we need to exercise toward Jesus Christ for salvation is the very same faith with which we are perfectly familiar in our everyday life. The object of our faith in Christ will be infinitely higher and more precious, but the attitude of mind and heart in believing Christ is the same. Jesus never stopped to explain or define faith, because this faith which the people were exercising everyday was the faith He was talking about. Christ's charge against the unsaved was not, "Ye do not understand," but "Ye will not believe."

Note how the Word of God illustrates and pictures saving faith. Faith is looking unto Jesus, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). Faith is receiving Christ, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). Faith is also confessing Christ, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

How do we get this faith? Saving faith comes by hearing and reading the Word of God, "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). How then can we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unless we know the facts about Him, and how can we know if we do not read God's Word which testifies of Him? Jesus also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth... hath everlasting life" (John 5:24). And Peter said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23).

But saving faith also comes by doing! Christ said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). Will you do Christ's will today by accepting Him as your Saviour? Sign the following and mail it to us NOW and become a real soldier of the cross! Realizing that I am a sinner, and believing that Christ died for my sins, I here and now trust Him to be my personal Saviour, depending on Him to forgive all my sins.

Signed _____
Address _____

(This little message is printed as a very attractive two-color, four-page tract with a red, white, and blue flag on the front page, and is proving very popular with our armed forces. Sample will be sent free on request to The Scripture Tract Society, 2011 Wellington Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. Anyone in the service of our country who will sign the above statement and mail it to The Scripture Tract Society, will receive a New Testament, postpaid, free.

ish thing of which you could possibly be guilty. May God help you, if you have any sense at all, not to go to Hell, but to receive Christ as your Saviour, and thereby be saved now and forevermore!

JESUS MAY COME TODAY!

(Continued from page two)

ty-one in the same passage says: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Remember that there are two phases of the coming of Christ. First, He will come into the air and call out His saints to meet Him. This is the first part of His coming, the part always referred to by Jesus when He said, "Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" and made similar statements. Then on the earth there will intervene the seventieth or last "week" of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27). On the earth then there will be "the beginning of sorrows," and in the last half of the "week," three and one-half years of great tribulation while the Antichrist rules the world. Then Christ will return from Heaven, coming literally in the clouds with the saints and angels to fight the battle of Armageddon, destroy the kingdoms of the Antichrist and reign upon earth. During the great tribulation this gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the world and then will come the end of the tribulation in the battle of Armageddon when Christ comes to set up His kingdom. That is what Matthew 24:14 means. The gospel or good news of the coming reign of Christ will be preached by a newly converted remnant in all the world after Christ comes and takes away His saints.

But in any case, the gospel has already been preached "in all the world for a witness unto all nations." At Pentecost we are told that "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven," that is, those who had come to abide there temporarily during the feast, probably from the time of the Passover through Pentecost. We are told that these heard the gospel by the Spirit-filled Christians and they were "out of every nation under heaven."

At a Bible Conference where I answered many Bible questions, came a full-blooded Indian from Oklahoma who asked for an interview. He had heard me on the radio, and was sent by his tribe from northern Oklahoma to ask me this question. Opening his Bible to this verse, Acts 2:5, he said, "My people want to know if any of those devout Jews were from America, among the Indians and prehistoric races in America at that time." His question certainly astonished me, and for a time I did not know what to answer. He continued to tell me how traditions had come down through the years from father to son among his people about God, the creation, the flood, and even some faint glimmer of ideas about the Christ. All I could tell him was that I believed the statement of the Scriptures, though I did not know whether the Scripture meant that there were Jews present who had lived among the American Indians or not. In any case, the gospel was preached to representatives in all the world when it was preached at Pentecost.

Again we are told about the church at Rome that "your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8), and Paul wrote to the Colossians about "The gospel which is come unto you, as it is in all the world" (Col 1:5, 6). So the gospel has already been preached in all the world, and even if Matthew 24:14 referred to this age, then it has already been fulfilled. We ought to do all we can to get the gospel to every creature, but the second coming of Christ need not be delayed awaiting evangelization of the world. Jesus may come at any moment. No prophesied event is to intervene before the coming of Christ to take away His saints.

(2). Some people believe that the coming of the Man of sin, the Son of perdition, or Antichrist, must precede the coming of Christ. They have in mind the warning of II Thessalonians 2:1-3 as follows: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means:

for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

The above Scripture plainly warns that "the day of Christ" is not "at hand." Some had evidently written in Paul's name, and others had evidently quoted Paul as saying that the day of Christ was at hand, that is, impending soon. Paul urged them not to be deceived since this day of Christ cannot come until there comes a great falling away and the Man of Sin or Son of Perdition (the Antichrist) be revealed.

But we must not confuse "the day of Christ" and the coming of Christ for His saints. The day of Christ here means the same as "the day of the Lord," a term used many, many times throughout the Bible. That term refers always to that future time when Christ will visibly, bodily, personally and literally return to the earth, destroy the armies of the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon and set up His throne at Jerusalem and there begin His millennial reign. The day of Christ or the day of the Lord, includes all the millennial reign of Christ until He shall turn the kingdom over to His Father. The day or period of Christ means the time of His rule. But the term, "the day of the Lord," or of Christ, never refers to Christ's coming into the air as a Bridegroom for His bride when the Christian dead will be raised and living Christians will be changed and all caught out together to meet Christ in the air. The rapture, the hope of the church when we will be caught out with Jesus for a honeymoon in our Father's house of many mansions which Jesus is now preparing for us, comes before "the day of Christ" or "the day of the Lord." After Christ takes out His saints, and the Holy Spirit who makes His abode in the bodies of the saints is taken away, then the man of sin will be revealed and will run his short and terrible course. The Holy Spirit who dwells in Christians now hinders the man of sin so that he does not appear and is not revealed to the world as yet. But as soon as we are taken out, then the man of sin will be revealed. Following him then will come the day of the Lord or the day of Christ.

The coming of Christ to the earth when His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives when He shall fight the battle of Armageddon and sit on His throne at Jerusalem is NOT imminent. The coming of Christ into the air to call out His saints, both living and dead, to meet Him, IS imminent. With this in mind, you can see that this passage of Scripture does not contradict the many plain passages where the Saviour warns us that His coming will be like a thief in the night or like the flood on the unsuspecting wicked in Noah's day, or like the unexpected return of the master to judge his servants after a long absence.

After the rapture of the saints, then there is a well defined train of events foretold in the Bible and those on the earth may know if they will read the Word of God about when the Saviour will return to destroy the man of sin and set up His kingdom. They may know about when the day of the Lord will come. But before that is the sudden coming of Jesus into the air for which all of us are to watch earnestly since no one knows that day nor the hour and since He may come at any moment.

After studying the Scriptures which prove the imminence of Christ's coming, it becomes evident that the saints must be called out of this world before the great tribulation. In order that the rapture may be the great surprise which is foretold in the Scripture, then the rapture of the saints must be the next event prophesied in the Bible. It must come before the battle of Armageddon, come before the reign of the man of sin, the great tribulation time. The thing that every Christian should watch for next is not the appearing of the Antichrist, not the restoration of the Roman Empire, not the mark of the beast, not the great tribulation, not the last great war and the battle of Armageddon, and not the reign of Christ at Je-

rusalem, but the coming of Christ for His saints.

V. New Testament Christians Expected Christ to Come in Their Lifetime

We have given above many of the plain statements of Jesus in the gospels concerning His imminent coming, but the rest of the New Testament is equally clear. New Testament Christians expected Jesus to come at any moment.

The people at Corinth were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" as the apostle Paul wrote by divine inspiration (I Cor. 1:7). The people of Thessalonica "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:9, 10). After people were saved in New Testament times, Paul properly taught them to be looking for and waiting for the coming of the Saviour! They knew His coming might be at any moment.

Writing to the Philippians, Paul said, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body . . ." (Phil. 3:20, 21). Paul himself was continually looking for the coming of the Saviour. And he had in mind here the time of the rapture when he would have a changed body, caught out to meet Christ.

To Paul was given the highest revelations in New Testament times, we suppose. He wrote fourteen books of the Bible, (if we include as his the book of Hebrews, which I think we should). He was not only a great teacher but was himself so filled with the Spirit that he was caught up into the third heaven and received revelations that were not lawful to utter. He was the most used of God of any New Testament character and will meet more souls whom he won to Christ than any other apostle. And it was constantly in the mind of Paul that Jesus would come, possibly in his lifetime, so he looked for Him steadily.

When Paul wrote about the rapture of the saints, when Christ comes into the air to receive His own, he wrote of himself as being among the living. In I Thess. 4:15 he said, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep."

"We which are alive and remain!" Paul expected to be alive and remain until Jesus came. Again in the 17th verse of the same passage he said, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." The Christian dead are mentioned in the third person but the living are mentioned in the plural, first person. It was Paul's confident hope, nay, his expectation, that he should be living when Jesus should come. That is how clearly the apostles were taught the imminence of Christ's return. They knew that He might return any moment.

Likewise, in I Corinthians 15:51, 52, Paul says,

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but WE shall all be changed,

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and WE shall be changed."

Again Paul spoke of the dead in the third person, "the dead shall be raised," but he spoke of himself with all the living, saying, "and we shall be changed." Again you notice that this is the time of the rapture when Christ calls His saints out to meet Him in the air. He is not speaking of the day of the Lord, a little later when Christ returns with all the saints to destroy the Antichrist and reign on the earth.

In James the fifth chapter are several references to the coming of Jesus as if He might come at any moment. To Jewish Christians scattered abroad, the inspired writer says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (verse 7). In verse 8 he says, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." In verse 9 he says, "Behold, the judge standeth before the door." These statements would only be true for that genera-

tion (or for any other generation, for that matter), if Jesus might be expected at any moment. It is the clear testimony of all the New Testament that we should expect Him at that hour or any time since the time of the apostles.

The imminence of the coming of the Saviour, and of course of the things that follow, are clearly taught by the apostle Peter. In I Peter 4:7, we are told, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." We are reminded of the exhortation of Jesus that "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." The coming of the Saviour was at hand in the sense that He might come at any moment and in the same sense His coming is still at hand.

The book of II Peter was written primarily with this in mind to stir up the people, reminding them of the promises of the apostles and prophets concerning the coming of the Saviour. Here is what he said.

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—II Peter 3:1-4.

And then follows in verse 9 the inspired explanation of why the coming of Christ has been postponed.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The coming of the Lord is at hand: it is only God's mercy that delays His coming so that others may be saved!

One should notice, too, that it is scoffers and unbelievers who will not believe that the Saviour is likely to come soon. These scoffers and unbelievers walk after their own lusts, (verse 3) and do not believe in direct creation and other miracles of God (verse 5 and 6). Dear reader, do not put yourself among these scoffers! Believe the Word of God that Jesus is coming. We believe He is coming very soon, we know that He may come at any moment.

VI. The Closing Testimony of the Bible

Today I have been greatly impressed with the powerful exhortation given us in the last chapter of the Bible concerning the coming of the Saviour. Here God's revelation to man is finished; the canon of Scripture is closed. And in the last chapter of Revelation at least five times we are warned that the Saviour is likely to come at any moment. Verse 6 says, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things WHICH MUST SHORTLY BE DONE."

Any honest interpretation of that verse must agree that it means the events pictured in Revelation must shortly be fulfilled, that is, every reader should look forward and expect Him soon. And remember that the next thing on God's calendar is the coming of the Saviour to take away His saints.

And then in verse 7 the Saviour said, "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Jesus is coming quickly. Is not that meant for a warning that you must be ready? Does not that mean that Jesus is likely to come at any moment? Unless this Bible is a fraud we must understand it so. The time is not named, but we are warned to be on our guard, to watch and be ready.

Again, in verse 10 the Lord said, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for THE TIME IS AT HAND."

"The time is at hand!" That is what Peter said (I Peter 4:7). The coming of the Saviour is at hand.

Then in verse 12 we are warned again. "AND, BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

And then the last verse in the Bible besides the closing salutation is verse 20 which says, "He which testifieth these things saith, SURELY I COME QUICKLY. Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Conclusion: Are You Ready?

Quickly! Quickly! QUICKLY! Jesus is coming quickly! He may come at any moment; it seems certain that He will come soon. Brother, are you ready?

I beg every Christian to lay aside the cares and covetousness and pleasure of this world that would prevent you from being happy if Jesus should come today. Here we must return to the words of the Saviour in Luke 21:34-36.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Notice these commands, "take heed to yourselves." Your heart will be overcharged with eating and drinking, and the cares of this life, and so that day will come upon you unawares, the Saviour said, if you do not beware. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always" is the next command of Jesus. Christians are to take heed about their life. They are to watch hopefully, expectantly for the Saviour's coming and they are to pray often for His coming. Jesus gave it in the model prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." That prayer asks for the return of Jesus and for His kingdom and all the related events. And John, the beloved disciple, was allowed to use the impassioned and spirit-directed prayer of his heart when he cried out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). So, Christians, take heed, watch and pray. Do not lose your testimony. Do not be too busy about making money. Do not get too absorbed in pleasure. Do not eat too much or drink too much. God will destroy both the belly and the meats, Paul says. Rather look for Jesus and live a pure life and win souls so you will not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

And, sinner, are you ready for Jesus to come? If not, only one thing will make you ready and that is for you to trust Him today to forgive you, surrender your whole heart to Him, claim Him as your Saviour! Do it today! Make sure of it while you can and then you, too, can join in the happy watching for the coming of the Saviour.

One night at the close of a service I went down a darkened aisle to prepare for a baptizing while the people waited. A woman seized my sleeve and stopped me. With quivering lips and broken voice she said, "Brother Rice, do you believe Jesus is coming soon?"

I answered back, "Yes, I believe that Jesus is coming soon: I ought to believe it much more than I do. There are many signs that His coming is likely to be soon and we know that it could be at any moment."

"Oh! I am afraid He is! I am afraid He is!" she said. I was startled and asked her the reason why she, a Christian, should talk this way. I said, "Don't you know you are saved? Haven't you trusted Jesus for forgiveness?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "but my husband is not saved. I am afraid that Jesus will come and leave him behind. What will I do if Jesus comes and my husband isn't saved and I have to go away and leave him?" I earnestly urged her to put the salvation of her husband's soul before everything else.

Do you believe that Jesus is coming? Then the way to prove it is to win souls, separate yourself from the wickedness of this world and let your light shine while you can.

When I used to play college football the referee would call to the captains of the opposing teams, "Are you ready, Decatur? Are you ready, Denton?" And then the whistle would blow. So with an earnest heart I call today to every reader,

"Are you ready, Christian?"

"Are you ready, sinner?"

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."